

CLASS: SS2
SUBJECT: GOVIC
TOPIC: COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION
WEEK: 2
TERM: THIRD TERM

Meaning of Colonialism

Colonialism can be defined as the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control of another country or territory, and exploiting it economically.

It can also be referred to as the establishment, exploitation, maintenance, acquisition, and expansion of a colony in one territory by a political power from another territory. It is an unequal relationship between the colonial power and the colony. It also means the policy or practice of a wealthy or powerful nation maintaining or extending its control over other countries.

The British System of Colonial Administration

Britain like other European nations sent its officials to its four West African colonies after the 1890 Brussel conference for effective occupation of the territories. By 1900 Britain has established political influence in her four colonies of Nigeria, the Gold Coast (now Ghana) Sierra Leone and the Gambia.

In West Africa, British crowned colonies include Lagos, Accra, Freetown and Bathurst colonies. These colonies were regarded as extensions of Great Britain so they were administered directly by the white British officials. The laws made in Britain were applied to these colonies.

BRITISH CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

1. **The secretary of state for the colonies:** The secretary of state for the colonies was also called the colonial secretary. He was a cabinet minister, he stood between the colonial government and British government, he formulated colonial policies, appointed colonial governors and could transfer the governors as he deemed fit. He received complaints from concerned nationalists of the various colonies which complaint were handled with a view to safeguarding the interests and objectives of the British crown over the colonies
2. **The Governor:** The administration of the British crown colonies was headed by a governor, who as the chief executive implemented British colonial policies. He was appointed from London through the secretary of states for the colonies. He also reported to the colonial secretary who presented such report to the British parliament. His other functions include- appointment of departmental heads, district

and residence officers and judges and exercised the power to remove and discipline any of them.

3. **Legislative council:** The legislative council made laws for the colonies. It had official members who were appointed by the governor, majority of whom were British citizens. The unofficial members were some African chiefs and European merchants who were nominated into the council.
4. **The executive council:** The executive council performed the functions of the executive arm of government. The executive council for each colony consisted of officials who were mainly whites. The council consisted of departmental heads, the secretary of the colonial government, Director of medical services etc. The council was responsible to the governor and advised him on government policies.

CROWN COLONY

A crown colony was regarded as British territory and it was **directly controlled from Britain**. The laws made in Britain were applied to these colonies. Crown colonies were established through military conquests, diplomatic missions and treaties with the local people. For instance the colony of Lagos was annexed in 1861 by John Beecroft of the British Royal Navy. The citizens of the crown colony were regarded as British subjects. The land and minerals located in the crown colonies belong to the British government. The crown colonial government administered the colony directly, while the governor made laws through proclamations. At the crown colonies the traditional rulers were not recognized.

Protectorates

A protectorate was a territory under the control and protection of the British government. Citizens of protectorates were classified as protected citizens, and were subject to the rule of their traditional rulers, who were answerable to the British authorities through the governor of the colony who administered the protectorate.

Trust Territories

The Trust Territory is a non-self-governing territory placed under the **authority of the United Nations**. Such a territory may be a formal mandate under the League of Nations, or a territory taken from another country after the Second World War. Such territories (trust territory) were usually placed under the supervision of the Trusteeship countries in the United Nations. Examples were: Tanganyika, Togoland, New Guinea, Colonies of Cameroun etc.

Native Administration

The colonial administration instituted a system of native administration in the protectorates, provinces and districts through the **indirect rule system** administered the people using the traditional political institutions of the people to govern the people.

The French Colonial Administration

The French colonial administration was a sharp contrast to that of the British. While the British authorities used **indirect rule system** while the French authorities used direct rule system known as the **policy of assimilation and later changed to association**. They were in control of the following territories in West Africa- Senegal, Ivory Coast (Cote d'Ivoire), Dahomey (now Benin Republic), Niger, Guinea and Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso).

France established a loose federation of her colonies with headquarters in Dakar, Senegal and appointed a governor general resident in Dakar to supervise the activities of the federation.

The Policy of Assimilation

The French government first adopted the policy of assimilation in the administration of their territories in West Africa. Assimilation means attempting to make black Africans become French. The French government made the Africans to adopt and use French education, language, religion, law mode of dressing etc. The policy was made to substitute the African way of life formally and informally. It was imposed on the Africans as a result of the French government's belief that African culture was inferior and theirs being superior should be embraced by the people in their colonies.

The policy of assimilation regarded the French colonial territories as part of the extended French empire overseas and these territories were placed under the control of the French government in Paris.

Factors Responsible for the Failure of the Policy of Assimilation

The policy of assimilation failed and was abandoned by France as a result of the following:

1. The policy of assimilation introduced direct administration which required heavy financial commitment from the central government in France.
2. The policy failed because it was rigid and discriminatory in its application to the people in the interior and those in the communes of Senegal.
3. The preference of the African people for their culture and way of life.
4. French and African scholars criticized the adoption of assimilation as a policy that never meant good for the people of the West African sub-region.
5. The Muslims rejected this type of education for fear of being converted to Christianity.

6. The implementation of the indigenization policy, which included imprisonment without trial and forced labour, accounted for the failure of the policy.
7. The Second World War was also responsible for the failure. Colonialists were advised to relinquish their colonies, more so as the Africans who participated in the war no longer felt that the white men were superior as they previously assumed. Furthermore, the United Nations advocated the self-determination of people under colonial rule.
8. President Charles De Gaulle was determined to replace assimilation with association, as a result of the opposition of the African people.

The Policy of Association

Following the weakness and failure of the policy of assimilation, France conceived the idea of the policy of association to replace assimilation. Association was the policy by which Africans associated with France in the political and economic realms, not as **Frenchified** Africans, but as a people with their own distinct culture and traditions. It was the French form of indirect rule.

The policy of association preserved the culture, religion, customs and political units of the various colonies. It accorded traditional rulers necessary regard in the affairs of the colonial government.

Comparison of the British and French Colonial Administrations

	BRITISH COLNIAL SYSTEM	FRANCE COLNIAL COLONIAL SYSTEM
1	Britain did not make any attempt to bring her colonies together in a federation.	France, especially through assimilation, sought to impose French culture and civilization on the people.
2	The educated elite were not significant in the indirect rule system.	France gave the greatest recognition to the educated Africans. They were accorded the title and rights of French citizens.
3	Britain saw her colonies merely as colonies that would soon be on their own.	France provided social amenities and her development structures to her Colonies than Britain did. This was because France regarded these colonies as part of France
4	British colonies had their local body of laws or constitutions.	The French constitution was also applicable to the colonies, even though some sections were modified and amended to make them operational in the colonies
5	The British system encouraged the formation of political parties in her West African territories	French territories had representatives in the French parliament and other educated elite could join political parties in France.
6	Britain used the indirect rule system which utilized African traditional rulers,	France largely used direct rule through the policie assimilation and association.

	and retained the people's customs and laws in the running of local affairs.	
7	Britain granted some autonomy to the traditional rulers in the administration of their local areas and incorporated them into the indirect rule system	France rendered the institution of traditional rulers completely redundant in some places and used them in some other areas only to collect taxes and recruit Soldiers and labourers.

Merits of British and French Colonial Administrations in West Africa

1. Agriculture was greatly developed during colonial rule
2. The British and French colonial administrators established modern transportation and communication systems in different parts of West Africa..
3. Colonial rule brought western education to the people of West Africa.
4. The Christian missionaries accompanied colonial governments and spread Christianity to the African people.
5. Colonialism resulted in the establishment of larger political units encompassing the old traditional kingdoms.
6. Big cities like Lagos, Ibadan, Kaduna, Dakar, Accra and Abidjan developed during British and French colonial administration.
7. Colonialism facilitated inter-state trade among the countries under the same colonial master.
8. The activities of the western missionaries facilitated the level of social development in both colonies. For instance, they established health and educational facilities.
9. The introduction of the British and French legal systems provided improvements to, and modifications of, the African traditional laws.

Demerits of British and French Colonial Administrations in West Africa

1. Britain and France presented their cultures as superior to those of the African peoples.
2. Colonial education retarded socio-economic and political development of these countries. The form of education introduced was meant to teach Africans how to read and write English and French languages, and not really to train them for the socio-economic development of their countries.
3. Britain and France exploited the economy of West African countries. They derived raw materials from these countries to feed their industries and brought back finished products to them at high prices.
4. Both Britain and France introduced the capitalist ideology into their colonies. The system vests economic wealth and control in the hands of a few individuals.

5. The policy of assimilation made French speaking countries completely dependent on France.
6. Colonial administration created long-standing division and mutual distrust between the traditional rulers (and their illiterate subjects) and the educated Africans who were opposed to European involvement in the domestic policies of West African territories.
7. Colonial rule resulted in the balkanization and separation of peoples.

ASSIGNMENT

List countries colonised by the British or France.

REMEMBER: the 1st and 2nd student to complete copying the note, on or before resumption will get 1000mb each from the subject teacher.